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ENTERED INTO LIFE

FROM

Patchogue, Long Island, N. Y.,

FEBRUARY 13th AND 14th, 1879,

—:O:—

MRS. LUCINDA GILLETTE,—*Thursday noon*,—
Aged Ninety Years and Nine Months.

MRS. DEBORAH ARTHUR,—*Thursday Morning*,—
Aged Seventy-nine Years and Nine Months.

MRS. MARY MOTT,—*Friday Noon*,—
Aged Seventy-six Years and Seven Months.

Also,—MRS. POLLY HEDGES, Oct. 30th, 1878,
Aged Eighty-four Years and Ten Months.

—:O:—

Old Age:

ITS PECULIAR DUES, DUTIES AND CHEER

BY

THEO. C. JEROME.

—:O:—

A Sermon, Preached at the Congregational Church, Patchogue,
Sabbath A. M., February 16, 1879.



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TEXT.—*Genesis, 47 : 8, 9. "And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, 'How old art thou?' And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.'"*

ON Thursday last, at 11 A. M.—almost precisely at this moment, three days ago,—in the house which has seemed to me so different from all my experience of public houses that I call it "The Home Hotel,"—from the brightest and most cherished room of that home, there passed to the Home inconceivably more bright, spacious and dear,— "The House not made with hands," she who was not only the oldest living member of our church, but also the oldest lady within many miles around.

Some of us, more recently resident here, or whose youthful memory extends but little back, may scarcely have heard the name of MRS. LUCINDA GILLETTE, so laid aside from all public or social assemblies, she has been for at least a decade past; nevertheless, for sixty,—seventy,—eighty,—*ninety* rounded years,—so nearly a century, the days have come and gone, with daily weal or woe to that now-freed soul, in this village, Sayville or Blue Point. Remarkable it seems to me,—coming but a year since from our roving, unsettled interior and Pacific populations, where "the oldest inhabitant" can look back not thirty years, and where you quite expect to notice any morning your next neighbor packing to remove a thousand miles:—strange, it seems to me, that ninety years of human life can have passed entirely within a radius of three miles! And yet I can but believe such a life, as a rule, the more fruitful and satisfying. Continually as I may seem to clash my progressiveness against your conservatism, nevertheless I sincerely rejoice in the stability of the Long Islanders. And for myself, having already in a life which has not reached thirty years, resided in a dozen States and Territories, I now hope that my remaining years be they few or many, may pass all in my native New York, or in New England. If

here a man has found work, and here his conscience tells him that he can do most for God and man, he may well be content and thankful: the lines have fallen to him in pleasant places.

Of these ninety years in which Mrs. Gillette has resided within the sound of this church bell, almost all, from a date in earliest youth, so early that I find no person who remembers nor record which states that date of her espousal of our Lord, at the call of the bell; or before there was a bell, and until extreme old age alone prevented: whether to Sabbath service, prayer meeting, sewing circle or Sunday School, as punctually, persistently, and consistently as do few of you, Mrs. Gillette has responded to these ceaseless weekly summons to praise or prayer, teaching or learning, worship or work, in the sanctuary of this church.

She was not fond of the extravagancies and ostentations of so called "society;" but wherever was sickness, sorrow, want or woe thither her foot was swift, her heart was warm, her hand was free. Her character, as described to me in hearty and admiring words by all with whom I have had opportunity to converse, was such as our own Long Island poet,—nay, the world's poet who has so recently exchanged his earthly wreath of Parnassian bays for the "crown of life" bestowed on those "faithful unto death,"—William Cullen Bryant, has portrayed,—

Of tender spirit and winsome frame,
Gentle in mien and mind
Of gentle womankind,
Timidly shrinking from the breath of blame.
One in whose eyes the smile of kindness
made
Its haunt, like flowers by sunny brooks in
May;
Yet, at the thought of others' pain, a
shade
Of deeper sadness chased the smile away.

Her glory now not of this shadowy state,
 Glory that with the fleeting season dies,
 But, as she entered at the sapphire gate,
 Rare joy was radiant in celestial eyes,
 How heaven's bright depths with sounding
 welcomes rung,
 And flowers of heaven by shining hands
 were flung!
 And He who long before
 Care, pain and sadness bore,—
 The Man of Sorrows, with countenance
 sweet,
 Smiled on the saint from His mercy-seat.'

As we pay this tribute to Mrs. Gillette, we can but remember, also, how in another Christian home of this village to-day there lie the mortal remains of another mother in Israel; who has been likewise consistent and devoted in our sister Methodist church, for more than three score years and ten,—Mrs. Mary Mott, who fell asleep in Jesus, Friday noon.

And again how, at day break of Thursday, yet another near of kin to some of you, and a former habitual attendant here, —Mrs. Deborah Arthur, at almost four score, passed from earth.

Surely such exceptional coincidences, — three deaths of ladies whose ages average eighty-three, within thirty-six hours, added also to the translation so recently of the second oldest mother in our membership, Mrs. Polly Hedges; and the third in age, Mrs. Charity Avery, lying sightless but with celestial faith, until her summons come;—surely such concurrences of Providence call us this morning as probably on no other Sabbath within a generation, to receive the dying messages and learn the living lessons of Old Age.—its dues, its duties and its cheer:—

Old Age; its Peculiar Dues. Duties and Cheer,—his is the subject.

"Render to all their dues." Preeminently appertaining from every young person to every aged is the due of Reverence. This is the corner stone of human society: fundamental in the second table alike of Sinai and of Calvary:—"Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise."

By "reverence" we understand the high-

est and purest of respect and duty which may be paid to a fellow creature. Its synonyms in "Webster" are veneration and adoration. Its only mentions in the New Testament or in Psalms are, in four passages, with application to Deity: (as Hebrews 12; 28,—*"Serve God with reverence,"* and Psalms 111; 9,—*"holy and reverend is His name;"* and in one passage, with application to parents. (Hebrews 12; 9, —*"we have had fathers of our flesh and we gave them reverence."*)

Preachers of the gospel are called variously, in the Bible, ministers or "servants;" pastors or "feeders of the flock;" bishops or "watchmen;" evangelists or "heralds of joy;" and by similar titles and epithets. But nowhere can I find Bible authority for designating them as "reverend;" and I exceedingly dislike our modern use of the term. I never allow it, when I can expediently avoid, attached to my own name. I certainly desire that all who know me should respect me, alike as minister and as man. If ever you cease to pay me that tribute, straightway may I cease to dwell among you. I could have no more influence. Popularity is not essential to a pastor's power; indeed may rather indicate weakness in him whose it is to "reprove, rebuke, exhort;" but the confidence and respect of the community are indispensable. But as to my being "Your Reverence" in the Romish idea of the priesthood, separate from, and exalted above common humanity, I pray you, reverence me not reverend, until, if God will, I become an old man. Then, if so be, may I receive that meed of years, the full veneration of all the young and the middle aged.

But, as there is that quality in all age which claims the reverence of all youth; so also, I may observe, is there a quality in all womanhood which claims the reverence of all manhood. Most proper is the custom of lifting or touching the hat in meeting ladies upon the street. The true gentleman, however, if he does this at all, will do it not only to those who are called "ladies" in society, but also to every pure

woman, however humble or ignoble, old or young. I touch my hat to the servant of my household if I meet her on the way,—I touch my hat to negro women,—I touch my hat to little girls; because in each of these, if true and pure, is the womanhood which manhood must universally revere. —

"For, as I worship God in Christ,
And in the forms of earth and air,
I worship Him imparadised
And thro'ed within her bosom fair
Whom vanity hath not enticed.

O woman—mother! Woman—wife!

The sweetest names that language
knows!

Thy breast, with holy motives rife,
With holiest affection glows,
Thou queen, thou angel of my life!"

Golden words of J. G. Holland in "Katharina!"

But indeed, true reverence for woman-kind will show itself more substantially than in so effortless a form of courtesy as the touching of the hat. As I came to our Sunday School Concert, last Sabbath evening, three young men stood on the steps of the church with lighted cigars, blowing or breathing the unclean odor almost into the face of every woman who entered the door. I know not the names of those young men; but I do know whatever their names or social standing that they are not truly gentlemen.

The use of tobacco in any form is selfishness.—I say, not only is it uncleanness and unwholesomeness to the user in his own person, but also is it selfishness toward other persons. Because it renders the breath and garments, even though the filth may not be then in the mouth, offensive to almost all ladies. And it is a wholly animal gratification which men alone enjoy. I want no pleasures which my wife and sister cannot share. Women have the hard times in this world; and whatever good times there are, they certainly ought to have half. Your tobacco and walking matches and loafing in groceries, and your secret societies are contrary to true manhood.

Think of it! how men who have all day, more or less, met fellow men in the social

industries of the shop, store, highway, field or fishing boat,—while women are closely kept within the four walls of the dwelling by the care of the children or of the household;—how, nevertheless, these men will gather at night to delight themselves in those mysteries, of which, however profound, pure or precious they may be, it is nevertheless the fundamental principle that no woman may ever learn a syllable. Ah, husbands and brothers of this church, I know not if I may convince you; but as for me, that which is too true, beautiful and good for my wife and sister is not true, beautiful nor good enough for me.

There are indeed right, useful and godly societies, the objects of which may be such that only men can be admitted to their sessions:—for example, the societies for "the Suppression of Crime" in New York and in other cities. These are a part of the stern business of men—not of their ease nor recreation. But I can conceive of no literary, religious social or convivial assembly; in which every true physical, social, mental or moral benefit would not be augmented rather than impaired by the presence of woman.

These masculine secret orders indeed vaunt their peculiar advantages and charities to widows and orphans of members. But how flimsy the plea; when, in any standard "Life or Accident and Sickness Insurance Company,"—for one half the initiation and annual dues paid to the secret society, far ampler returns may be secured in the day of need!

Other more momentous reasons there are why the principles upon which these secret, masculine social orders are avowedly built must be ever radically contrary and hostile to republican institutions, to the Word of God and to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. But this morning, in speaking of the honor, courtesy and care due to woman, I say men are false to such courtesy;—and husbands in particular to their marriage vows, in becoming or remaining active members of any masculine social or convivial order.

But to complete what I was saying of the selfishness of the use of tobacco, even the heathen man and the publican will tell you that is especially ungentlemanly and unseemly in or about the house of God. And I respectfully request all men and boys who come to our concerts or to any other services to throw away their cigars or other "sweet (?) morsels of sin which they roll under their tongues," before stepping foot upon these church premises.

Furthermore;—on our Concert or Lecture evenings, I observe that many young men have a habit of standing in the vestibule—and of persisting in so standing, in spite of all requests that they will take seats; with the manifest object of staring into the faces of the ladies entering. Let me repeat it, (as I said the same at a concert last summer,) that no gentleman will remain among those who thus obstruct the entrance or sidewalk and compel ladies to run the gauntlet of so many rude eyes;—neither before nor after any assembly;—neither Sabbath nor week days: nor yet about the Post Office door at mail time, when so many wish to pass in and out; nor upon the public corners at any time.

The conviction grows upon me that Patchogue has more than its share of "loafers." I am of the opinion that the truly busy man cannot, and the truly gentle man will not, spend many minutes in any idle company;—least of all where betting, gambling and drunkenness have such play as at the famous "walking match" yesterday.

That was the most numerous assemblage I have seen in Patchogue. Nevertheless, as passing once through the street and a few moments from a store window, I studied the throng,—some of them coming with breaths of villainous gin, from our licenseless "hotel," (the "hotel," with the excessively modest "sign!") in all that throng I saw no woman, and but two or three of the men whom I am in the habit of seeing at church or lectures. And these two or three men, I am happy to say, looked as ashamed and surprised to see me as I was

to see them.—I only hope their motive in being there was the same as mine.

And let me call them to witness if yesterday's gathering was not a fitting illustration of the first verse in our International Sunday School study to day,—“walking in the counsel of the ungodly and standing in the way of sinners.” He whose “delight is in the law of the Lord” will take as little delight in one of these new fangled man-races as at an old fashioned horse-race.

Such then are the obligations of a genuine manhood:—to have no part in races, “clubs,” “societies,” or pleasures of appetite, from which women are excluded. It is a fair test of any indulgence or amusement:—if gentle, pure women can be present, neither as sharers nor as spectators, then that amusement or indulgence can be safely set down as unwholesome for men. You may entitle the sermon, if you choose, thus far, (fitting testimonial theme to her who was truest woman as well as oldest mother, of all,) “The Claims of Christian Courtesy toward Womanhood.”

But if all pure women are thus to be revered, much more are all the aged. To every aged person, whom we meet upon the public way, in our village or rural life, whether an acquaintance or not, whether woman or man, whether in rags or in silks and linen, we may well lift the hat. To old men ladies should yield their seats. I repeat, even though old gentlemen in old-time politeness may be swifter than Young America to tender seats in the horse car or elsewhere to poor or plain women; nevertheless any young woman errs, if she accept the old man's seat. Rather should all the young stand, when seats are insufficient; or respectfully rise, when the aged enter the room wherein they sit. “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the person of the old man and fear thy God.” Veneration for the aged, you notice, in that command, (Leviticus 19:32,) being mentioned as a part of the fear of God. It is a form of piety.

Indeed the word piety, in the primitive, means simply filial duty,—as thus the hero

of the *Æneid* bearing from burning Troy, aged Anchises on his shoulders is called by Virgil "pius Æneas."

Said Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, long ago, in his youth, "I venerate old age: and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eye, and the shadows of twilight grow broad and deep upon the lonely soul."

Thus also in the very passage of the text, the Pharaoh, mighty Autocrat of the world's then mightiest empire, revered old Israel,—although but a famine-impo-
verished fugitive in his Capitol:—"And Joseph brought in his father and set him before Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

Secondly;—we study the *Peculiar Duties of Old Age*.

"Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

Yes, Jacob's life was not only the most harassed and checkered of all the lives of the patriarchs,—a ceaseless conflict between the Jacob-nature and the Israel,—between sin and grace,—fear and faith; but also was his life brief, compared with other lives before. The epoch was now approaching when the limit of earthly existence was fixed at three-score years and ten. But should this be cause for discontent? Least of all, when a soul has gained so final a victory of faith over fear as Jacob had, and receiving the hundred fold more in this present time, is just then asked "how old art thou?" should the answer be as plaintive as seems this of the text?

In a New Year's sermon, six weeks ago at Trinity Church, Brooklyn, Rector C. H. Hall, D. D. alludes to funeral services as sometimes conducted; in which services texts are read at hap-hazard from a compilation of Bible dirges,—mainly from Job, Ecclesiastes and the Ninetieth Psalm. But the Episcopal service, he says, cites these only as the back ground for the light of

the gospel of immortality. First, you hearken to the sad wail of Moses,—the overburdened leader of a stiff-necked generation; the man who had seen the warriors of the mightiest nation of earth swept away in the Red Sea; the man who felt the moveless ages of eternity, and the fleetingness of temporal affairs; you hear his low monotone of half despair. "Teach me the number of my days, that I may not die as the fool dieth; spare me a little before I go hence and be no more seen; I, a stranger, a sojourner, a shadow and a vanity." It is on this dark back-ground that the Episcopal service paints for the Christian mourner the splendid vision of the resurrection of the spiritual body. It is after the ear has been stilled by this minor strain, that it catches the song of triumph over death and the grave.

What a violation of this divine order of truth is it to adopt the Old Testament alone as the gauge and measure of our feeling, and undertake to combine things that God never confuses. If we seek to learn or teach truth, light and life from the Word of God, we must not repeat its texts at random nor overmuch out of their connection. It is in the gospel,—not in the Old Testament that we are told "life and immortality are brought to light." In the New Testament we find no such sad laments the brevity of time or barrenness of age as this of our text. It may be partly for the reason that the New Testament writers were comparatively young men. But in one of Paul's Epistles, we find him speaking of himself as "being such a one as Paul the aged." Read over, then, that Epistle and the parallel one of his last days,—to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Timothy and you will discern the undying energy of Paul's hope. "As the natural life decayed the inner strength was renewed."

St. John was at the last a very old man. The legend is that he lived to be one hundred years of age. And when he could no longer walk, on the shoulders of young men, he would be borne into the gatherings of the church at Ephesus and there re-

peat his simple, sublime messages of heavenly cheer,—as it were from the border land between two worlds.

It is true we are all passing into the vale of years:—the youth no less than the aged. But shall we not grow old gracefully? which is indeed, says Madame de Steal is the most difficult thing. We hear so many of the fathers sighing, "Oh that these days were as good as the former times, when this thing and that and the other were thus and so, rather than as we see them now." But "growing old gracefully" has been described as the opposite of this, viz : a disposition to regard the improvements of the age with an appreciative eye; not clinging to the old ways, simply because we were accustomed to them, and therefore attached to them, by the power of early associations, but allowing ourselves to be convinced of the superiority of the more modern customs when, in fact, they are worthy of adoption.

Old age we expect to be peculiarly free from passion, lust or malice: as "that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."

The seas are quiet when the gale gives o'er,
So calm are we when passions are no more;
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they
view

Who stand upon the confines of the new."

An old man, scoffing, reveling or hating; as Herod, at seventy, slaying the infants for fear of a rival, or Noah, at six hundred, sleeping on the earth the unclean sleep of the sot,—what a spectacle! David, at past fifty, was guilty of adultery and murder; how great the fall of the man after God's heart! He never on earth recovered either his outward prosperity or his inward peace. His old age was, throughout an expiation in kind for those sins of his maturity. But he still looked forward with deepest penitence and ended his eventful career by preparing "with all his might" materials for the Temple, whose first stone, nevertheless, he knew he must not lay.

May not the righteous "bring forth fruit in old age?" as Simeon the venerable, and

Anna, the widow of a great age, first in the Temple to greet the Rising Sun: Caleb, at eighty, still ambitious of conquest and danger: Moses and Aaron, eighty and eighty-three, when they began the most momentous public lives of history! Says George Wm. Curtis,—“To have known one good old man—one man, who, through the chances and mischances of a long life, has carried his heart in his hand, like a palm-branch, waving all discords into peace—helps our faith in God, in ourselves, and in each other more than many sermons.”

And have not we listened to the ripest accents of such seers as Park and Tyng and Finney? or of such bards as Bryant, at eighty-one, giving forth "The Flood of Years," or as Longfellow, at past seventy, addressing the few remaining Bowdoin class mates of his youth?

“What then? Shall we sit idly down and say The night hath come; it is no longer day? The night hath not yet come; we are not quite

Cut off from labor by the failing light;
Something remains for us to do or dare,
Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;

* * * * *

For age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress,
And as the evening twilight fades away
Thesky is filled with stars invisible by day."

Thirdly:—as to the Peculiar Cheer of Old Age, Quoth Adam to Orlando, in the Forest of Arden,—

"Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty:

For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility.
Therefore my age is a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly."

"My experience," says Turner, "in my sixty-seventh year, is that notwithstanding ailments and infirmities, and the privations they occasion, it is just as happy as all the preceding seasons were, though in a different way. So happy as to cause no regret that they have passed, and no desire to exchange what is for what has been."

Said one friend to another: "Sir, I think you are on the shady side of three score,

are you not?" "No," was the reply, "I am on the sunny side of three score." "Why you are surely past sixty?" "Yes; but I call that the sunny side, for it is nearest to my heavenly crown."

And how beautiful is Richter's thought:

"Winter, which strips the leaves from around us, makes us see the distant regions they formerly concealed; so does old age rob us of our enjoyments, only to enlarge the prospect of eternity."

Should not such be the Christian's outlook; rather than dwelling repiningly upon the past? It is the grandsire who, even more than the young father or mother, loves to play with the little child. It is the old who plant trees; and who most are gladdened by each retarding Spring. The believer has always "more, and more to follow:" even if heart and flesh fail, the Lord as his strength and his portion forevermore.

I imagine that to the soul of Moses, passing upward from Pisgah, even the Promised Land, with all its breadth and beauty, dimmed and faded, as his eyes opened on the Heavenly Canaan! And if that were Jacob's thought in the text, -if his look was upward as he answered Pharaoh, and by contrast only he called these days "few and evil;" then must his words have been well pleasing unto Heaven.

And this we may believe, was his meaning. For it is in accordance with the entire tenor of these closing chapters: no other verse, like the text retrospective; but all prophetic, forgetting the varied scenes of that most checkered life behind and pressing forward for the prize. "For thy salvation, O God, I have waited. Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last." And in the sublime muster-roll of the heroes of faith, in the eleventh of Hebrews, Jacob's name is honored only in connection with these last years: "By faith, Jacob when he was a *dying*, blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped leaning on the top of his staff." Observe, however, this was no death-bed repentance. The faith in which he died was the same as (in kind though less in

degree than) that in which he had lived, struggling for it through more than twice three score years and ten of exceptional depravity and temptation. He could give the watchword in Egypt only because he had learned it long, long before, at Beth-el and Peniel.

And the more accurate picture is this,—rather than the unbroken tranquility of Isaac, (the greatest excitement of whose life was to "walk in the fields at eventide and lift up his eyes when the camels were coming!") or the extraordinary faith of Abraham, Father of the Faithful; more encouraging, I say to the common Christian experience of ceaseless anxieties, snares and sins is the experience of this sad sinner, Jacob:—with whom nevertheless, as undoubtedly as "with Abraham and with Isaac," "many shall come from the east and west and north and south, and sit down in the kingdom of God."

In a city Art Gallery I stood studying a large painting, of a winding valley between mountains,—lofty and rugged, shadowed and sombre. But, while I gazed, suddenly one gleam of sunshine through a distant shutter fell upon the summit of the vale; and thus instantly all the landscape seemed kindled with light and heat. Such is the faith of Jacob's death-bed. And such is the Christian:

"his course he begins
Like the sun in a mist while he mourns
for his sins,
And melts into tears; then he breaks out
and shines.

And travels his heavenly way;
But when he comes nearer to finish his race,
Like a fine setting sun he looks richer in
grace.
And gives a sure hope, at the end of his
days,

Of rising in brighter array."

"At evening time there shall be light."
"Abide with us; for it is toward evening
and the day is far spent." To the aged
especial and multiplied are the promises
of God's Word: as he who, if greatest
among the poets, is also not least among
the prophets, has put into the mouth of the
shrewdest of all England's ancient states-

men,—nevertheless not shrewd enough to have learned in season the “beginning of wisdom,”—

“O Cromwell, Cromwell,
Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.”

Such is peculiarly the cheer of old age. As ripe fruit is sweeter than green,—as harvest time is brighter than seed time,—as sailing into port is happier than the voyage,—as the completion of a work is more glorious than the commencement; so may age be sweeter, brighter, happier, more glorious than youth. “I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing.”

And so, in application to us all; more momentous than Jacob's life or words, or than the life and faith of these whom we to-day commemorate, are the lives and souls and works and days of us who yet survive. “Make me to know *mine* end and the measure of my days what it is, that I may know how frail I am.”

Mrs. Gillette has lived a Christian from infancy to age. She could not remember the time when she did not love and serve God. Her light shone through ninety years. Her father before her was a preacher of the gospel. Her children after her are Christians:—how faithful, loving and true, let one pew in this church, one place in the prayer-circle, one home in Patchogue testify. But these children, too, as the youngest of them said to me yesterday, are entering old age. And are their children and children's children ready to take the vacant places in church and prayer-meeting and the daily uplifting of the cross of Calvary?

Young men, young women, the fathers and mothers are passing away. Mrs. Hedges eighty-five years of age, and yet in her

place beside the pulpit, at East Patchogue Chapel, only the Sabbath before her death, has ascended from prayer to praise. Mrs. Avery, also eighty-five, sustaining that weekly women's prayer-meeting through two generations, lies waiting the Bridegroom. These all lived in faith. Sixty, seventy, eighty years, they have been watching and working for this dear church and for the kingdom of our Lord. Who shall take their places?

Three of our deacons daily lament their physical infirmities. Last Sabbath morning, one of these four chairs at the right and left of the sacramental table had no occupant; it had not been the case within many years before; but it is a sad foreboding to us of the time which cannot be far distant, when, of Colonel Overton;—no! he has higher rank than that;—of “Deacon,” “Elder,” “Father” Overton, the pillar above all others of this church through half a century, we shall cry “My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!” And who, I ask again, shall take these vacant places? Upon whom shall the mantles fall?

Young men and young women there are indeed in the church; but almost in vain are they entreated to commence to lead others in prayer or to testify of Jesus, “It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.” To a young man, Jesus said, “Follow Me.” But he answered “Suffer me first to go and bury my father.” And Jesus said, “Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.”

“How old art thou,” O listener to-day? One hundred and thirty years, ninety, eighty-five, eighty or seventy-six, as with these whom we commemorate? Why, it is to me immense! a fabulous, glorious age, instead of “few and evil days.” Youth gazes at life through the telescope's lesser end and it seems exceeding long. But to the old man, reversing the instrument and gazing through the larger end, how small life is! Not only few have been my years, says Father Jacob, but also “few my days.”

only 47,000 days, that is all! or about 30,000 to our modern sires and dames. Surely some chance to do some good, each priceless, golden day of a dozen working hours. Not the shortness of time, but "redeeming the time" is the lesson that we need.

And "evil" have been thy days, O Father Israel? Ah, recount thy mercies if thou canst. Set up thy Bethels. Raise thine Ebenezers. "Mahanaim,"—"this is God's host." Christen thy children, no more Benoni (Son of Sorrow) nor Naphtali (Son of Strife) but Judah (Praise) and Joseph. (Joy.) A million million ages already has been thy earthly span, if only each mercy is reckoned a single day.

"How old art thou," O listener? Thy years, be they few or many,—thy lot rich or poor, nevertheless, are crowned with God's unmerited mercy. Each month has brought its new bounties,—each moment its watchful care. God is Love. Oh, the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father! Oh, the great salvation of our Elder Brother! who forgiveth all thine iniquities,—who healeth all thy diseases,—so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. Bless God, O my soul.

But "how old art thou," O soul? Hast thou known the second birth,—been born again and born from above, O Nicodemus? For if not though a "Master in Israel" and immaculate in self-righteousness, thou canst not see the kingdom of God. One may be four score and ten,—one may be middle aged, —or in the buoyant prime of

life; and yet the soul be an infant of days or (alas!) unborn. The child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred, shall be an hundred fold accursed. "The hoary head is a crown of honor, if it be found in the ways of righteousness." We do not begin to count a man's years, until we can find in him little else to count. "Last scene of all, that ends this strange, eventful history, is second childishness, and mere oblivion; sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." But no,—no! "There shall be no more pain:"—no more tears,—no more death,—no more old age. They number not in days nor in years where these have gone to dwell.

"Count not the years that have idly flown.
The years that are vainly spent;
Nor speak of the hours thou must blush to own,
When thy spirit standeth before the throne,
To account for the talents lent:—
Count not those years.

But, number the hours redeemed from sin,
The moments employed for heaven:—
Oh, few and evil thy days have been,
Thy life a toilsome but worthless scene,—
If to God it has not been given.

Will the shade go back on its dial-plate?
Will thy sun stand still on its way?
Both hasten on. And thy spirit's fate
Rests on the point of life's little date.—
Then live while tis called to-day.

Life's waning hours, like the Sibyl's page,
As they lessen, in value rise.
Oh, rouse thee and live; nor deem man's age,
Stands in the length of his pilgrimage,
But, in days that are truly wise.

